Environmental Bulletin

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from the Savannah River Site

ESD to explain Plug-In ROD approach planned to remediate C-Area Reactor Seepage Basin

This Explanation of Significant Difference (ESD) is being issued by the Department of Energy (DOE), with concurrence by the United States Environmental Protection Agency-Region IV (EPA) and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) to document the decision that the C-Area Reactor Seepage Basin (CRSB) meets the criteria specified in the Plug-in Record of Decision (ROD). The detailed determination of how this unit meets the criteria is in the Technical Evaluation Report available in the Administrative Record File as noted in the locations identified as information repositories.

The CRSB is located in the central portion of the SRS, approximately 800 feet west of C-Reactor The CRSB, consisting of three connected basins and the associated pipeline, received low-level radioactive wastewater from 1959 to 1986.

The CRSB meets the criteria specified in the Plug-In ROD for using the plug-in remedy. The criteria: (1) is radioactively contaminated, (2) is near a nuclear facility, (3) contains principal threat source material (PTSM), and (4) the PTSM is not in contact with groundwater or surface water. The remedy includes the following components:

- Stabilizing the PTSM soils to the depth of 6 ft in the first basin and to 4 ft in the second basin using a cement-based grout mixture. This treatment will convert the waste into a form less likely to result in human exposure to radionuclides.

- Placing a low permeability soil cover over all three basins. This will reduce infiltration through the stabilized soil and prevent exposure of humans or animals to radionuclides in the stabilized soil.

- Grouting the pipeline. This will prevent exposure to burrowing animals.

- Using land use controls to prevent human contact with the stabilized PTSM soils.

This remedy will be the final remedy for this Operable Unit (OU), since the groundwater associated with this OU is being addressed in conjunction with the C-Area Reactor groundwater OU.

The SRS is required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) to publish an ESD whenever there is a significant change to a component of the remedy identified in the ROD. This ESD is unique in that it does not detail a change from a remedy selected in the ROD, but rather documents the waste unit for which the remedy will be implemented. EPA, SCDHEC and DOE have determined that using an ESD format to present the waste unit selected for implementation is a key component in communicating remedial decisions for the Plug-in ROD. The public comment period is scheduled for May 8, 2000 to June 6, 2000.

Information Repositories

The ESD is available at the information repositories listed below :

- DOE Public Reading Room, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina-Aiken campus, Aiken, SC;
- Thomas Cooper Library Government Documents Department, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC;
- Reese Library, Augusta State University, Augusta, GA;
- Asa H. Gordon Library, Savannah State University, Savannah, GA.

It is also available on the Internet in the SRS Home Page (http://www.srs.gov), under “Happening Now,” (http://www.srs.gov/general/srs-home.htm) and on the SRS Environmental Restoration Home Page, under “Public Involvement” (http://www.srs.gov/general/srenviro/erd/pub/pubinv.html).

Any questions or comments may be directed to Jim Moore, Wetinghouse Savannah River Company, 742-A, Aiken, SC 29808; 1-800-249-8155 or jim02.moore@srs.gov.

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